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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) presents a model college local constitution that provides a starting point in drafting a constitution. The items that are required of all AFT locals by the AFT Constitution are underlined; other items and the constitution as a whole may be changed or expanded to suit any particular local situation. The 14 articles are as follows: name, objectives, membership, officers, committees, the executive council, affiliations, duties of officers, duties of standing committees, meetings, finance, rules of order, amendment, and availability of constitution. (SW)

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A MODEL COLLEGE LOCAL CONSTITUTION

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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AFT

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This sample is provided only as a starting point in drafting a local constitution. The structure of a local at a large university with several campuses will of necessity be different from that of one at a small, highly-centralized institution. Those items underlined are required of all AFT locals by the AFT Constitution. All other items, and the constitution as a whole, may be changed or expanded to suit any particular local situation.

Assistance in drafting a local constitution may be obtained from your State Federation, or from the Colleges and Universities Department, AFT.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

This organization shall be known as the_____ Local No. _____. *(The name of your local should include the word Federation.)*

ARTICLE II

Objectives

The purpose of this organization shall be:

Section 1. To bring associations of teachers into relations of mutual assistance and cooperation.

Section 2. To advance the professional interests of college teachers.

Section 3. To improve the instruction in institutions of higher learning.

Section 4. To eliminate all forms of racism in education.

Section 5. To cooperate with organized labor for the purpose of advancing democratic concepts through the schools at all levels.

ARTICLE III

Membership

(Specific membership requirements, within the limits of the AFT Constitution, may conform with the structure of the college or university, the desires of the membership, and any state or local statutes defining the collective bargaining unit.)

Section 1. All members of the teaching staff and faculty are eligible for membership.

Section 2. Librarians and such other personnel as shall be specifically designated in the bylaws shall be eligible for membership. *(This may include teaching assistants, research assistants, lab assistants, and other para-professionals.)*

Section 3. Supervisory personnel with the rank of dean or above shall not obtain membership. Members who are promoted to the rank of dean or above, automatically are removed from membership on the effective date of the promotion.

Section 4. Associate membership without the right to vote shall be open to retired teachers and others eligible for membership, and to teachers who withdraw from the profession for research or other pursuits, and who wish to maintain affiliation.

Section 5. Teachers in public or private institutions outside the jurisdiction of this local may be admitted to membership until such time as a local is chartered in their jurisdiction.

Section 6. No discrimination shall ever be shown toward individual members or applicants for membership because of race, religious faith, or political activities or belief. Locals may establish procedures for admission of new members except that no discrimination shall ever be shown toward individual members or applicants for membership because of race, sex, religious faith or political activities or belief.

Section 7. A member may be expelled for acts detrimental to the Federation upon presentation of written charges signed by at least ¼ the total membership and approved by at least ¾ the Executive Council. The member shall have the right to appeal the decision to the membership at the following membership meeting and shall be reinstated with full rights if a majority of the members present vote to reinstate. *(Note—If the Union is the collective bargaining agent, removal of an employee from membership may result in serious legal complications and should only be done after legal consultations.)*

Section 8. Any member who fails to pay dues upon their expiration *(plus short grace period if desired)* shall be dropped from the rolls and their names removed from the records at the National Office. The member may be reinstated upon the payment of _____ fee plus all back dues *(or payment of at least three months back dues).*

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1. The following officers shall be elected annually by this Federation:

1. President
2. Vice President*
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary
5. Financial Secretary, if desired

Section 2. Membership in good standing is required to hold office.

Section 3. Nominations for office shall be made at the regular (March) membership meeting. Notice shall be provided to each member at least 15 days prior to the meeting that nominations will be in order. Nominations shall be accompanied by petitions containing at least (10) signatures of members.

Section 4. Ballots shall be prepared and mailed to each member in good standing within 15 days following the nomination meeting. The ballots shall be returned to the election committee no later than 15 days from the date originally sent to the members. The candidate receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be declared elected.

Section 5. Officers shall be installed at the regular membership meeting in (May) or at a special meeting or banquet held for this purpose.

Section 6. Vacancies in any office shall be filled by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1. The following standing committees shall be active in this Federation:

(1) Membership Committee; (2) Salary and Finance Committee; (3) Publicity Committee; (4) Welfare or Grievance Committee; (5) Civil Rights Committee; (6) Education Committee; (7) Legislation Committee; (8) Social Committee.

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* More than one Vice President may be provided for in the constitution. Some locals have functional Vice Presidents representing various colleges or campuses, evening division, part-time employees, etc., each elected by their respected divisions.

Section 2. The following special committees shall be appointed:

(1) Budget Committee; (2) Audit Committee; (3) Election Committee.

Section 3. Chairmen of each of the standing committees and of all special committees shall be appointed by the President with the consent of a majority of the other elected officers.

Section 4. Members of each committee shall be appointed by the chairmen of each committee with the consent of the President.

ARTICLE VI

The Executive Council

Section 1. The Executive Council of this Federation shall consist of the following:

1. All elected officers
2. Chairman of standing committees
3. The chief delegate to the local labor body

Section 2. The Executive committee shall administer the policy of this federation as set by the membership at regular meetings. It shall have the power to act for the good of the Federation in emergency situations where the policy cannot be set by the membership.

Section 3. The chairman of the Executive Council shall be the President of the Federation.

Section 4. The Executive Council shall meet regularly during the academic year as set forth by the bylaws.

Section 5. The Executive Council shall have the power to employ all personnel including an executive secretary, clerical help, and other persons on full or part-time basis as may be determined by needs and finances of the Federation.

Section 6. To make contracts and incur liabilities which may be appropriate to enable it to accomplish any or all of its purposes; to borrow money for Federation purposes at such rates of interest and terms and conditions as they may determine; to issue notes, bonds, and other obligations; and to secure any of its obligations by mortgage, pledge, or deed of trust of all or any of its property and income.

Section 7. The Executive Council shall report its activities at each regular membership meeting.

ARTICLE VII

Affiliations

Section 1. This Federation shall maintain affiliation with and whenever possible send delegates to the following organizations:

a. The American Federation of Teachers—all delegates and alternates to the National Convention of the AFT shall be elected by majority vote at the (April) membership meeting. Notice of election shall be made at the previous membership meeting and mailed to each member at least 15 days prior to the election. The President and Secretary shall certify the election and forward the credentials of all elected delegates and alternates to the National Office as soon as possible but not later than 15 days before the convening of the National Convention. The delegates shall confer with the treasurer to make sure the AFT per capita through June has been sent to the National Office at least 15 days before the convening of the National Convention.

b. The *(State) Federation of Teachers*—Delegates shall be elected at least one month before State Convention at regular membership meeting.*

c. The *(Local AFL-CIO central labor assembly)*—Delegates shall be elected at the regular annual election of officers.*

d. The *(State AFL-CIO labor body)*—Delegates shall be elected at least one month before the state labor convention at a regular membership meeting.*

Section 2. All delegates shall make written reports to the Executive Council on meetings attended.

Section 3. Every reasonable effort shall be made by this Federation to pay the legitimate expenses of delegates to meetings and conventions of affiliated organizations.

Section 4. The Federation to the best of its ability shall be active in the affairs of affiliated organizations.

Section 5. Delegates to affiliated organizations shall meet the same requirements as officers of this local.

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* Must be member in good standing of this Federation.

ARTICLE VIII

Duties of Officers

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Federation and of the Executive Committee. He shall be ex-officio member of all committees, except the Audit Committee, shall sign all necessary papers and documents, and represent the local when and where necessary. He shall make a report to the membership at least once each year summarizing the accomplishments of the Federation and outlining plans for the next year.

Section 2. The Vice President shall perform all duties of the President in the absence of that officer.

Section 3. The Secretary shall issue all notices, shall answer correspondence at the direction of the President and shall report outside correspondence to the President and the Executive Board. He shall be the custodian of the seal and charter of the Federation. The Secretary shall record the minutes of the Executive Board and of general membership meetings.

Section 4. The duties of the Treasurer shall be:

a. To receive, record, and deposit in the name of the Federation all monies from dues and all other sources.

b. To keep the membership roll, issue receipts, and delinquent notices.

c. To forward to the National Office, on or before the 15th of each month, the report of members in good standing, together with mailing addresses, on the first day of that month, together with all taxes and assessments due the American Federation of Teachers.

d. To be chairman of the Budget Committee. He shall present a written report to all members once each year.

e. To keep adequate records available at all times for the Executive Council and the Audit Committee.

f. To pay all bills authorized by the adopted budget, retaining voucher or invoice for same. Expenses not authorized in the budget must be presented to the Executive Council for authorization.

g. To submit a financial statement for the local including a statement of assets and liabilities and a statement of income and expenses to the

AFT Secretary-Treasurer within five months of the end of the fiscal year for the local.

ARTICLE IX

Duties of Standing Committees

Section 1. The Membership Committee shall plan and execute a dynamic program to insure growth and vitality of the Federation. It shall present a written report to the Executive Committee.

Section 2. The Salary Committee shall prepare and substantiate salary and other contract proposals. It shall present these proposals for approval of the membership and then shall negotiate these proposals with the employer.

Section 3. The Publicity and Public Relations Committee shall prepare and distribute a *(monthly or quarterly)* bulletin. The editor of the bulletin shall be a member of the committee. Every effort shall be made by this committee to make use of other sources of publicity, i.e. newspapers, radio and television, etc.

Section 4. The Welfare or Grievance Committee shall act on all grievances submitted in writing to the Executive Committee. It shall present to the Executive Committee a procedure for handling grievances. This committee shall cause the procedure to be publicized as widely as possible. *(See Handbook for Building Representatives and Manual for locals.)*

Section 5. The Civil Rights Committee shall plan Civil Rights conferences, workshops, publicity and other activities which shall combat all forms of racism in education and promote integration of both faculty and students.

Section 6. The Education Committee shall study and make recommendations for improvements in curricula, class size, equipment, and other professional matters.

Section 7. The Legislative Committee shall consider recommendations of the AFT, the State Federations, and the local pertaining to all levels of government. It shall study proposed legislation which may affect the Federation and the schools. It may initiate recommendations. It may present the record of government officials.

Section 8. The Social Committee shall arrange such programs and entertainments and perform such duties as the local may direct.

ARTICLE X

Meetings

Section 1. The time and place of meetings shall be fixed by the membership.

Section 2. There shall be at least one meeting per month. *(Quarter during regular school year.)*

Section 3. A quorum shall consist of (10) percent of the total membership.

ARTICLE XI

Finance

Section 1. Regular dues shall be fixed by majority vote of members present at any regular meeting providing notice of contemplated dues increase has been announced at a previous meeting. *(Note: Locals with large jurisdictions should provide for referendum ballots on dues increase.)*

AFT Constitution requires minimum local dues of $50 per year.

Section 2. Additional finances may be obtained by various fund raising activities.

ARTICLE XII

Rules of Order

Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern in all cases not covered by this Constitution or the By-laws of this local.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendment

Section 1. This constitution may be amended as follows: *(Choose "a" or "b")*

a. The proposed amendment shall be submitted at any regular membership meeting and read to the assembled members. A ¾ vote at the following membership meeting shall be sufficient to adopt the amendment.

b. Constitutional amendments may be submitted to the Executive Council. The Executive Council may initiate amendments. After having received a majority vote of the Executive Council the amendment shall be submitted to each member. A majority vote of all members by secret ballot shall be sufficient for adoption.

ARTICLE XIV

Availability of Constitution

Section 1. Three copies of this Constitution and all future amendments shall be submitted to the National Office of the American Federation of Teachers.

Section 2. Copies shall be made available to other affiliated organizations upon request.

Section 3. Copies shall be available for any members of this Federation upon request to the Secretary. *(Many federations print the Constitution and Bylaws in pocket size editions and present one to each member.)*